

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of the claims will replace the prior versions, and the listing of claims:

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1-3. (canceled)

4. (currently amended) A method for manufacturing a soft-baked rice cracker, comprising the steps of:

steam-kneading a mixture of rice powder and water to form a rice dough;

knead-extruding the rice dough and forming a piece from the rice dough;

conducting a first drying step for drying the ~~mixture of the rice powder and the water~~ piece;

conducting a second drying step for drying the ~~mixture of the rice powder and the water~~ piece at a temperature higher than that at the first drying step;

~~producing a baked dough of~~ baking the piece to produce the soft-baked rice cracker having a specific volume of 5.0 to 6.5 cm³/g;

coating a surface of the ~~baked dough~~ rice cracker with oil; and

applying emulsified sauce onto the surface of the ~~baked dough~~ rice cracker coated with the oil, said emulsified sauce having a viscosity of 50 to 800 cp.

5-6. (canceled)

7. (previously presented) The method for manufacturing a soft-baked rice cracker according to claim 4, wherein the oil is vegetable oil.

8. (previously presented) The method for manufacturing a soft-baked rice cracker according to claim 4, wherein the emulsified sauce contains soy sauce as aqueous sauce, at least one of safflower oil and rice oil as an oil component, and at least one of lecithin and monoglyceride as an emulsifier.

9. (currently amended) The method for manufacturing a soft-baked rice cracker according to claim 4, further comprising the steps of, before steam-kneading the mixture of the rice powder and water, washing rice grains and milling the rice grains to produce the rice powder; ~~knead-extruding the mixture after steam-kneading the mixture and before the first drying step;~~ and conducting a third drying step for drying the baked-dough rice cracker coated with the oil and the emulsified sauce after applying the emulsified sauce onto the surface of the baked-dough rice cracker.

10. (currently amended) The method for manufacturing a soft-baked rice cracker according to claim 9, wherein in producing ~~the baked dough of~~ the soft-baked rice cracker, said ~~mixture of the rice powder and water~~ piece is baked in a first baking step, a second baking step, and a third baking step, said mixture of the ~~rice powder and water~~ piece in the second baking step being baked at a temperature higher than those in the first baking step and the third baking step.

11. (previously presented) The method for manufacturing a soft-baked rice cracker according to claim 4, wherein said first drying step is conducted at a temperature lower than that in the second drying step.

12. (cancelled)